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TOWN OF CHILMARK CHILMARK, MASSACHUSETTS

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January 23, 2012

Senator Scott P. Brown
359 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Brown:

The Town of Chilmark is seeking your assistance regarding the rebuilding of Menemsha after the devastating fire of July 12, 2010. We thank you for the staff members that you sent to assess the situation and offer your assistance after the fire.

The town has been working closely with designers from the US Coast Guard for the replacement of the Menemsha Boathouse for the past year. We ask that you join the town in sharing our concerns with the U.S. Coast Guard that the new boathouse is too large as currently designed.

The Chilmark Historical Commission and Board of Selectmen have met three times with Captain George Bonner, PE and members of the DHS/USCG Facilities Design & Construction Center from Seattle to review the 15% design documents for the replacement boathouse. Local zoning does not allow coastal structures above 18 feet and the town objects to the 31 foot new design.

The boathouse was the largest structure on Menemsha Harbor and dominated the area. The proposed new design was much larger than the original boathouse and included three floors. It would represent an unprecedented violation of our local zoning and adversely impacted the jewel that Menemsha village is.

The town has worked with the USCG to bring the new design closer to the original boathouse. The USCG design team has cooperated with the town and reduced the mass of the building. However, the height of the building remains three feet taller than the original boathouse and will block the historic view shed for the many homes and cottages along Menemsha Harbor and change the public vista as well for the thousands of people that visit.

Chilmark supports the USCG mission and is grateful to have them in our harbor. We thank them for their cooperation and look forward to continued good relations between Station Menemsha and the town.

Sincerely,

Board of Selectmen

Historical Commission